

Black Hills National Forest EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



District Archaeologist Justin Hammer Northern Hills Ranger District



What is your educational background?

I graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2009 with a BA in History and Anthropology. I received a MA in History from the University of South Dakota in 2011. I focused on American Indian History.

What interested you most about the USFS?

As a local kid I spent many days enjoying the Black Hills NF. Fishing, hunting, hiking, etc. When it came to deciding what I wanted to do for a career, the idea of working outside in an area I love couldn't have been more appealing.

What type of work are you doing for the USFS?

I am currently the district archaeologist for the Northern Hills Ranger District. As a part of my job I manage the archaeological and historical sites located on the district. Currently we have around 2000 sites recorded on the Northern Hills of which approximately 400 are eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Through consultation with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office and many of our local tribes we protect these significant sites from destruction. As a part of site protection I also get to work on a number of historic restoration projects.

What is your favorite thing about working for the USFS?

I love how my job gives me the opportunity to work in areas of the forest that are not often visited. I also really enjoy having the privilege to study and protect archaeological and historical sites significant to our past. The Black Hills has a vibrant history dating back thousands of years and the clues to that history are all around us.

How long have you been with the USFS?

I started working as a seasonal employee on the Black Hills National Forest in 2006. I have been a permanent employee for almost 5 years now.

What do you most admire about the Black Hills National Forest?

As a fifth generation Black Hills resident I appreciate how I am able to enjoy the same things as my parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. Thanks to the protection of public lands, the area has largely remained the same for well over a hundred years now.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What would be your ultimate career objective or goal inside the USFS?

In ten years I see myself still working on the Black Hills National Forest as a district archaeologist. I really enjoy my job and I look forward to learning more and more.

What do you like to do outside of the office...hobbies or a passion you have?

I enjoy spending time with my wife Katie, 9 month old son Nolan, and our two dogs. We enjoy spending time outdoors hiking, skiing (without the baby), and camping. I also enjoy hunting with my dad.